

# The young Muslim electrifying New York

[theday.co.uk/the-young-muslim-electrifying-new-york-41](https://theday.co.uk/the-young-muslim-electrifying-new-york-41) 1 July 2025



**Big ideas:** Zohran Mamdani told voters that billionaires should not exist. Meanwhile, Trump has threatened to cut off the city's funds if he "doesn't behave".

**Is progressive politics back? Zohran Mamdani wants free public transport and childcare — and he could soon be the mayor of New York City.**

## What's happening?

What do you hope to achieve by the time you are 34 years old? How about being mayor of one of the world's largest cities?

That is the hope of Zohran Mamdani. He is the **Democratic Party** hopeful in this year's **New York City** mayoral election.

## Find out more

Mamdani was born in **Uganda** to parents of Indian descent. He came to the US at the age of seven. He would be the first ever **Muslim** and South Asian mayor of the city.

Now **left-wing** parties around the world hope to follow his example. In the UK, **Green Party** leadership hopeful **Zack Polanski** thinks he can use similar ideas to win.

But will they be able to repeat his success?

In his campaign, Mamdani focused on issues that affect people's lives.

He called for free public transport, a **rent freeze**, free childcare and a higher **minimum wage**.

At the same time, he stuck to his core beliefs on issues such as **Palestine**.

That meant he had a small army of volunteers — 46,000, he says — ready to go and knock on doors on his behalf.

On the other hand, some say that luck played a bigger part. Mamdani is young and has an easy-going personality. He makes funny videos online. Other **politicians** will not be able to do this.

And for now, he has only won over voters from the same political party as him. He has not yet tested his ideas on all New Yorkers.

## Is progressive politics back?

### Some say

Yes! Mamdani shows that by connecting directly with voters and sharing popular policies, you can be a winner. Others will follow his example.

### Others think

No! Mamdani has won the support of people who already think like him. But he may not be able to persuade **right-wing** voters to support him.

### Some people say

*“Turn on to politics, or politics will turn on you.”*

### Ralph Nader (1934 – ), US politician

*“‘Tis the business of little minds to shrink; but he whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves his conduct, will pursue his principles unto death.”*

### Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809), English-born American revolutionary

*What do you think?*

### Six steps to discovery

#### 1. Connect

**How do you feel about this story?** - What do you think of Zohran Mamdani?

#### 2. Wonder

**What questions do you have?** - For example: What matters more in politics: policies or personalities?

#### 3. Investigate

**What are the facts?** - Pick out one thing we know about this story and one thing we cannot say for certain.

#### 4. Construct

**What is your point of view?** - You are looking to kick off a new political movement. What is the first thing you do?

#### 5. Express

**What do others believe?** - In groups, decide whether or not you would vote for Mamdani if you lived in New York.

#### 6. Reflect

**What might happen next?** - Imagine you are running to be the mayor of your town. Make yourself a campaign poster.

### Glossary

**Democratic Party** - The left-leaning US political party.

**New York City** - A city in the US. It is the biggest city in New York state.

**Uganda** - A landlocked country in East Africa with a population of 47 million.

**Muslim** - A follower of the religion of Islam. There are 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide.

**Left-wing** - A range of beliefs that are the opposite of right-wing ideas. People on the political left usually believe in collective responsibility and the good of society. They often, though not always, support higher taxes and a more active, interventionist government.

**Green Party** - A centre-left party largely focused on environmental politics. It formed part of a coalition government with the Social Democrats between 1998 and 2005.

**Zack Polanski** - A British politician who is deputy leader of the Green Party.

**Rent freeze** - When the amount tenants are charged to live in properties owned by others does not increase each year.

**Minimum wage** - The lowest pay a worker can be given per hour by law.

**Palestine** - An area located in the Southern Levant region of Western Asia.

**Politicians** - Someone whose job it is to be involved in running a country. Politicians try to persuade people they have the best ideas to run the country.

**Right-wing** - Sometimes referred to as 'conservative', this is a range of political beliefs that emphasise the value of tradition, individual freedom and responsibility, low taxes and a hands-off approach to government.